

Postdoctoral Fellowship

AHA application forms and instructions will change prior to the next deadlines. Check for updates when the summer applications open in **Grants@Heart** in mid-May.

Application Deadlines

- **Founders Affiliate - July 28, 2016**
- **Great Rivers Affiliate - July 28, 2016**
- **Greater Southeast Affiliate - July 27, 2016**
- **Midwest Affiliate - July 28, 2016**
- **SouthWest Affiliate - July 27, 2016**
- **Western States Affiliate - July 27, 2016**

Award Activation: Jan. 1, 2017

The application must be submitted by 5:00 p.m. Central Time in **Grants@Heart** on the deadline date. The application will be submitted to the designated grant officer, who will submit it to the American Heart Association (AHA).

Program Description, Eligibility and Peer Review Criteria

Success Rates

Objective

To empower postdoctoral trainees who are not independent with assistance and training from a mentor to initiate careers in cardiovascular and stroke research.

Science Focus

All basic, clinical, and population research broadly related to cardiovascular disease and stroke.

Target Audience

At the *time of award activation*, the applicant must meet the following criteria:

- Hold a post-baccalaureate doctoral degree, such as M.D., Ph.D., D.O., D.V.M., Pharm.D., or equivalent.
- Finished no more than five years postdoctoral research training or experience (excluding clinical training).
- This award is not intended for individuals of faculty rank.

Exceptions:

- M.D. or M.D./Ph.D. with clinical responsibilities who needs instructor or similar title to see patients, but who devote at least 80% full-time to research training.
- R.N./Ph.D. with faculty appointment. Awardee will be expected to devote his/her time to research or activities directly related to their development into independent researchers.

All other eligibility criteria apply.

The awardee will be expected to devote at least 80 percent of full-time work either to research or to activities pursuant to independent research (instead of administrative, clinical, or teaching responsibilities). At the time of award activation, candidate cannot be pursuing a doctoral degree. Applicants in this situation should be referred to the AHA Predoctoral Fellowship.

Sponsor

It is imperative that the fellow receive counsel and direction from a sponsor who is an established investigator invested in the progress of the project.

Citizenship

At the *time of application*, must have one of the following designations:

- U.S. citizen.
- Permanent resident.
- Pending permanent resident (any resident who has an approved I-765 form and has submitted an I-485 application with the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services).
- E-3 - specialty occupation worker.
- F1 - student visa.
- H1-B Visa - temporary worker in a specialty occupation.
- J-1 Visa - exchange visitor.
- O-1 Visa - temporary worker with extraordinary abilities in the sciences.
- TN Visa - North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) professional.
- G-4 Visa - family member of employee of international organizations.

Exception: A Postdoctoral Fellowship applicant who is outside the United States at the time of application must provide visa documentation prior to award activation. The awardee must maintain one of the designations listed above throughout the duration of the award.

Location of Work

The project must be conducted at any accredited institution in one of the following affiliates:

Founders - Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Rhode Island, Vermont

Great Rivers - Delaware, Kentucky, Ohio, Pennsylvania, West Virginia

Greater Southeast - Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, Puerto Rico, Tennessee, U.S. Virgin Islands

Midwest - Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, North Dakota, Nebraska, South Dakota, Wisconsin

SouthWest - Arkansas, Colorado, New Mexico, Oklahoma, Texas, Wyoming

Western States - Alaska, Arizona, California, Hawaii, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, Oregon, Utah, Washington

American Heart Association research awards are limited to non-profit institutions, including medical, osteopathic and dental schools, veterinary schools, schools of public health, pharmacy schools, nursing schools, universities and colleges, public and voluntary hospitals and other institutions that can demonstrate the ability to conduct the proposed research. Applications proposed by a federal institutions or employees will not be accepted, except for applications to the AHA's Cardiovascular Genome Phenome Study ("CVGPS"), and applications from Veterans Administration employees.

Funding is prohibited for projects conducted at institutions outside the United States.

Budget

Annual Award Amount: \$46,850 to \$60,400

Total Award Amount: \$95,450 to \$120,800

Stipend Experience Stipend Amount

0-1 years \$42,850

1-2 years \$44,600

2-3 years \$46,350

3-4 years \$48,200

4-5 years \$50,150

5-6 years \$52,150

6-7 years \$54,250

7 or more years \$56,400

Fringe: \$1,000 annually for health insurance

Project Support: \$3,000 annually for travel, computers, equipment, etc.).

International travel is permitted and does not require prior AHA approval.

Duration: Two years. May apply for a second two-year award. All eligibility criteria apply. Maximum of four years of Association postdoctoral fellowship support per individual.

Restrictions

- The sponsor/co-sponsor may mentor no more than two AHA-funded fellows (predoctoral and postdoctoral) concurrently. Fellows who are part of an AHA Strategically Focused Research Network are excluded.
- At the time of award activation, the applicant may not have more than five years of postdoctoral research training or experience (excluding clinical training).
- The awardee must resign the award if promoted to a staff or faculty position. However, an awardee with a faculty position remains eligible for this award if that awardee holds a M.D., M.D./Ph.D., or R.N./Ph.D. and maintains clinical responsibilities under the supervision of an instructor.
- At the time of award activation, the awardee may not be pursuing a doctoral degree.
- The awardee may not hold a comparable award as a source of supplementation.
- The applicant may submit only one affiliate application per deadline.
- Submission of a Postdoctoral Fellowship application that contains content that is identical or significantly similar to that of any other application -- especially the sponsor's grant application -- is prohibited. Both applications will be recommended for disapproval. However, both applications may be funded if aims are not duplicated.
- The applicant may submit the same or similar application three times (the original plus two **resubmissions**). The same or similar application submitted the fourth time will be administratively withdrawn.
- The awardee may not hold another AHA award concurrently. However, the awardee may apply for a Scientist Development Grant or Grant-in-Aid award during the last year of the project and must resign the Postdoctoral Fellowship award when the other AHA award is activated.

Peer Review Criteria

An applicant is prohibited from contacting AHA peer reviewers. This is a form of scientific misconduct and will result in removal of the application from funding consideration and institutional notification of misconduct.

In order to judge the merit of the application, reviewers will comment on following criteria, which should be addressed in the proposal. Each criterion will account for one-third of the overall score.

Criterion 1 - Evaluation of the Investigator (Postdoctoral Fellow)

1. Does the trainee have potential for a research career?
2. Are the trainee's career plans specified in the application?
3. Is this supported by the trainee's academic record and the assessment provided by the three letters of reference?
4. Does the trainee have prior research experience and/or publications?
5. Is there a clear rationale supporting the need for the proposed training?
6. What is the sponsor's assessment of the applicant?

Criterion 2 - Sponsor/Training Plan and Environment

Because the fellow receives only a stipend from this award, additional research support for the proposed project **MUST** come from the sponsor's laboratory. Therefore, the proposed project will likely be related to the sponsor's funded research. The sponsor should clarify the role that the applicant played in the development of the proposal, the relationship of the proposed project to ongoing research in the sponsor's laboratory, and how the project will contribute toward the training and career development of the applicant.

Sponsor/Training Plan

1. Is the mentor an independent investigator?
2. Does the mentor have the experience to direct the proposed research training, as evidenced by a track record regarding productivity, funding and prior trainees?
3. Does the mentor have adequate current funding to support the fellow's project?
4. Does the mentor provide a comprehensive training plan which incorporates career and developmental goals detailed in the applicant's Individual Development Plan (IDP)? Will the mentor's training plan facilitate the applicant's progress towards his/her research career goals?

Environment

1. Does the scientific environment in which the work will be done contribute to the probability of success for the training experience?
2. Is there evidence of institutional commitment?

Criterion 3 - Evaluation of the Proposal

1. **Significance:** Does this study address an important problem broadly related to cardiovascular disease or stroke? What will be the effect of these studies on the concepts, methods and technologies that drive this field?
2. **Approach:** A new fellow may not have had adequate time to generate preliminary data. Applicants may present preliminary data generated by the sponsor. The assessment of preliminary data, whether generated by the sponsor or the applicant, should be put into perspective so that bold new ideas and risk taking by beginning investigators are encouraged rather than stymied. Are the conceptual framework, design, methods and analyses adequately developed, well integrated, well-reasoned, feasible (as determined by preliminary data or the expertise available in the mentor's and/or collaborator's laboratories), and appropriate to the aims of the project? Does the applicant acknowledge potential problem areas and consider alternative tactics?
3. **Innovation:** Is the project original?
4. **Impact:** How does this project address the mission of the AHA, and how likely will this support enhance PI career development in the area of cardiovascular diseases and stroke?

Interim Reporting - Annual progress reports must be submitted by both the fellow and sponsor, and should include narrative description of accomplishments related to research and training, as well as an inventory of abstracts and publications produced.